

## Comments to FCC on IBOC

As the FCC considers its rule making it should have in mind principles which promote the use the technology and give IBOC its greatest potential to offer services to the public. From the perspective of private interests, rule making should open the marketplace to as many options for use as are economically feasible. This, I assume, is consistent with the FCC's free market orientation. Constraints on that approach should be considered only if the overall public interest is served by these limitations. Rules should not be imposed to grant existing players a constricting hold which it would not otherwise have in the use of spectrum..

When I examine the Ibiquty white papers on proposed standards for IBOC I see some contradictions with the free market policy ideas espoused by the FCC. Surely the FCC will want to review these points if it is to offer impartiality and consistency in its rulemaking. My comments will be directed on two points:

- Requiring FM to use digital spectrum for main channel programming in the hybrid period.
- Not offering a mode for FM which would reduce analog bandwidth requirements to open more digital bandwidth in the hybrid mode.

The argument for the first restriction is that requiring all IBOC channels to present the same programming on digital as in analog will promote the development and acceptance of IBOC because of the perceived improvement of quality which will result. This may be true for AM but in FM I believe perceived quality differences will be much less. For most listeners I do not think it will provide a compelling reason to invest in the newer technology. Indeed in trade publications this issue is widely discussed and those who are hesitant about investing the new technology use the lack of perceived quality improvement as one of their strongest points for not wanting to invest in IBOC. My point is that quantity and variety of services will be the stronger reason to adopt the new technology. Therefore opening as much bandwidth as possible for these new services is actually the strongest market impetus to move things forward. Success of ew services might upset the apple cart and change market share but after all such changes are part of the creative capitalist enterprise. Perhaps forces opposing this are doing so to protect existing assets rather than taking the risk to develop these new markets and services. I hope that the FCC will agree that such short sighted and parochial interests deserve no such protections. Deregulating this existing rule would help to open things up.

The second point suggests that by reducing the analog FM signal bandwidth by operating in a mono mode, a reduced bandwidth, a reduced modulation index. Spectrum could be opened for more digital services in the hybrid mode even if the duplication of signal is kept in the rules. My rough estimate is that such measures could open up 50-60 kbps of digital bandwidth.

With that a station might offer another service. For example, a station could offer a mono talk signal on its FM, (reducing its bandwidth to 12 khz and its modulation index to 3) to make room for a second service on its digital bandwidth, (ex. Second language programming) Such a broadcaster might decide that degrading his FM signal slightly would be more than compensated for by the increase in listenership and revenue which could be bought in using the digital multicast capacity such a change opened up. Should the rules preclude this choice or offer it to the broadcaster who might decide to exploit this trade off? Nothing in the rules would mandate such a choice. If it did not make economic sense no one would use it. If the model became more viable and started to make sense why not allow it as an option?

There are in the broadcast world many narrow and parochial interests who while they talk free enterprise are mostly parochial in concern, more interested in protecting existing turf than in using the spectrum given to them in such a way that it maximizes public utility. I hope the FCC shows the integrity to stand up to these interests and act in the name of both truly free enterprise and public good.

Sincerely,

Tom Ammons